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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8416
INFO RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 0140
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 3063
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 2899
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 1443
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISI/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 000255

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/03/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV KDEM MARR MOPS UN HA CI

SUBJECT: CHILE: TOUGH ANALYSIS AND CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR HAITI

REF: SANTIAGO 81

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Emi L. Yamauchi
for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Senior Chilean defense officials briefed visiting Assistant Secretary of Defense Rodman on the Chilean military's view regarding Haiti during the Defense Consultative Committee (DCC) talks in Santiago on January 25. Chilean MOD Undersecretary for War Gabriel Gaspar said that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was essentially fighting a holding action in Haiti. He proposed measures to propel change: an effective coast guard, better intelligence sharing, a more robust role for police advisors, a halt to deportations from the U.S., and U.S. political pressure on Haitian businessmen who are opposing Lavalas electoral participation. Chilean Chief of National Defense Vice-Admiral Jorge Huerta signaled Chile's participation in UN efforts in Haiti beyond June 2006 would be a decision for the incoming administration of president-elect Michelle Bachelet and the new Congress. End Summary.

The View of Haiti from Chile

¶2. (C) On January 25, the Chilean Chief of National Defense, Vice-Admiral Huerta, briefed ASD Rodman and his delegation on the situation in Haiti as part of the Defense Consultative Committee meetings in Santiago, January 24-25. Drawing on his recent visits to Haiti as well as conversations with UNSYG Special Representative for Haiti Valdes and acting MINUSTAH military commander Brigadier General Eduardo Aldunate, Huerta drew a sobering picture of the situation in Haiti. He said, "In Haiti, rather than reconstruction, one needs to speak of construction." MINUSTAH faces difficult climactic and sanitary conditions: it has had to create its own infrastructure from scratch, and deal with a poorly educated and sometimes hostile population. While demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programs have been generally successful in disbanding militias, heavily armed criminal gangs constitute an increasing problem, Huerta emphasized.

¶3. (C) Huerta said the Haitian National Police (HNP) were police in name only, possessing neither the skills nor the inclination to protect the populace. The HNP often victimized the very people they were supposed to protect, and

had sold UN-supplied equipment, including patrol vehicles, for cash. To date, MINUSTAH has been able to minimize major police abuses and thus had maintained a good degree of popular support. Referring to criticism of the Brazilian command for not operating aggressively, he noted that in the urban slums, armed gangs continued to exert control, and used human shields in their confrontations with MINUSTAH forces. This made it nearly impossible to conduct military/police operations without collateral damage to civilian populations.

Huerta argued that operations to pacify criminal gangs around Port-au-Prince had generated formally registered complaints of excessive force, which may haunt MINUSTAH in the future.

¶4. (C) Overall, Huerta said MINUSTAH had maintained general peace, albeit in a holding pattern without improving the social or economic situation on the island. The next major step - elections in February - would result in a government "completely dependent" on foreign donations. Huerta asserted that Haiti would not be able to function on its own for the foreseeable future. Doing so would require a functional civil society, nonexistent in Haiti. Gaspar added that interim PM Latortue had his household packed up and was primed to leave right after the elections.

The Political Imperative

¶5. (C) ASD Rodman lauded the tremendous job that Chile was doing in a difficult environment. He agreed there was no quick exit strategy from Haiti, and expressed hope the election would create a nucleus for future consensus building. DASD Pardo-Maurer noted that Latin America's deployment and leading role in MINUSTAH was a regional

success story, even if the outcome was not a stable, independent Haiti. Huerta pointed out Chile's continued participation in MINUSTAH would depend on elected authorities in Chile who had not yet taken office (Note: President-elect Bachelet and a new Congress will take office March 11. End note.) U/S Gaspar interjected that Haiti had a regional resonance: "This is the most important military undertaking in history by the countries of Latin America, and it is being examined under kleig lights by the media and legislatures in countries from Brazil to Chile." Those who support regional involvement in Haiti are being pressed to justify the investment, Gaspar continued, suggesting the cost of failure would weigh on Chile's future decisions to join peacekeeping operations in the region or world.

The Way Forward

¶6. (C) DASD Pardo-Maurer asked for Huerta's assessment of the effect of drug-trafficking on the MINUSTAH operation and political situation. Huerta said the lack of a coast guard was allowing all types of contraband to enter and transit Haiti, providing a source of funds and influence to the criminal gangs. Gaspar pressed for a series of concrete actions to improve MINUSTAH operations in Haiti. He said MINUSTAH urgently needs a coast guard to control Haiti's coastline, to cut the flow of contraband, and to provide security. Civilian police advisors need to be given a stronger role and greater control over the Haitian National Police (HNP). Gaspar said the U.S. should temporarily suspend criminal deportations to Haiti. In the current environment, the Interim Government of Haiti cannot process or hold deportees, which he said only added to the security problems. Echoing earlier comments made by Chilean Foreign Minister Walker (reftel) Gaspar noted that some U.S.-based Haitian businessmen, predicting the victory of Lavalas candidates in some races, are attacking the political process. He asked the U.S. to bring some pressure to bear to end these attacks. Gaspar also requested publication (before the election) of information linking candidates such as Guy Phillippe to drug trafficking.

¶7. (C) Comment: Although the analysis was sobering, neither

Gaspar nor Huerta seemed willing to write off MINUSTAH's involvement as an inevitable failure. Rather, they reflect a broader GOC view of Haiti as a long-term project, and were pressing for concrete signals of support and tangible signs of progress to maintain the political maneuvering space for Chile's continued engagement in Haiti.

¶8. (U) This message was cleared by the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

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